

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

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PASS NEA/ARN FOR AMBASSADOR MURPHY

E.O. 11652: N/A

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SUBJ: CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS: ENCLOSING GARDEN SITE PROPERTY
AND REHABILITATING TENNIS COURTS

1. FOR SEVERAL MONTHS THE EMBASSY HAS BEEN STUDYING HOW BEST TO REHABILITATE TWO CLAY TENNIS COURTS LOCATED ON GARDEN SITE PROPERTY (NO. 03476) ADJOINING SCHOOL ENCLOSURE. STUDY HAS BEEN MOTIVATED BY INCREASE IN STAFF TO APPROVED LEVELS FOLLOWING RESUMPTION OF RELATIONS IN JUNE '74 AND BY RECOMMENDATION OF NOVEMBER '74 INSPECTION REPORT WHICH READS IN PART AS FOLLOWS: QTE, FROM THE LONG-RUN POINT OF VIEW, DAMASCUS WILL BE A DIFFICULT POST FOR FAMILIES. THERE IS ESSENTIALLY NOTHING TO DO -- THERE ARE NOT EVEN THE USUAL TOYS OF AN OLIGARCHY WHICH DIPLOMATS CAN USUALLY ENJOY. THERE ARE ESSENTIALLY NO SWIMMING POOLS, GOLF COURSES, TENNIS COURTS, OR CONCERT SERIES, ALMOST NO MOVIES, ETC. THE DEPARTMENT AND POST SHOULD MAKE EVERY REASONABLE EFFORT TO ASSIST WITH PROVISION FOR RECREATIONAL FACILITIES FOR MEMBERS OF STAFF AND THEIR FAMILIES. UNQTE.

2. REHABILITATION OF TWO FORMER TENNIS COURTS APPEARS TO BE MOST EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATE WAY TO CARRY OUT THIS RECOMMENDATION, IN WHICH MISSION FULLY CONCURS. SINCE LOCATION OF COURTS AND THEIR ORIENTATION WILL HAVE TO BE CHANGED SOMEWHAT TO FIT WITHIN REDUCED
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U.S. PROPERTY LINES, EMBASSY HAS CONSULTED WITH

SEVERAL LOCAL CONTRACTORS AND ARCHITECTS TO OBTAIN COST ESTIMATES. RESULTS OF THESE CONSULTATIONS, WHICH INVOLVED NO EXPENSE TO USG, ARE AS FOLLOWS:

A. BEST WAY OF PROCEEDING IS TO DIVIDE PROJECT INTO THREE PARTS:

(1) CONSTRUCTION OF WALL AROUND UNWALLED PORTION OF PERIMETER OF GARDEN SITE. THIS MUST BE DONE IN ANY CASE TO CONFORM WITH LAWS OF MUNICIPALITY OF DAMASCUS WHICH HAS GIVEN EMBASSY WRITTEN NOTICE TO THAT EFFECT.

(2) REHABILITATION/ CONSTRUCTION OF TWO CLAY TENNIS COURTS WITH STRONG WIRE FENCE ON THREE SIDES. PERIMETER WALL WILL CONSTITUTE FOURTH SIDE.

(3) TENNIS COURTS ILLUMINATION.

3. FOUR SEPARATE CONTRACTORS OR ARCHITECTS HAVE SUBMITTED TO US INFORMAL BUT CAREFUL ESTIMATES BASED ON OUR PRECISE BUT NON-TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS WHICH CONFORM WITH USLTA RECOMMENDATIONS FOR RECREATIONAL/ CLUB PLAY. THESE COST ESTIMATES ARE SUMMARIZED BELOW WITH PERAMETERS GIVEN WHERE SIGNIFICANT VARIATION OCCURRED.

A. WALL. CONSTRUCT 7 FOOT HIGH CONCRETE BLOCK WALL AROUND PRESENTLY UNWALLED PORTION OF NEW PERIMETER (ABOUT 280 YARDS) - \$10,600.

B. TENNIS COURTS.

(1) COVER DRAINAGE DITCH WHICH RUNS PARALLEL TO OLD COURTS AND WOULD RUN UNDER PORTION OF NEW COURT LOCATION - \$1,000 TO \$1,500.

(2) REHABILITATION/CONSTRUCTION OF TWO COURTS, INCLUDING DRAINAGE AND FOUNDATION - \$11,000.

(3) FENCING ON THREE SIDES WITH GATE - \$8,400 TO \$10,960.
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(4) TEARING DOWN PART OF EXISTING SCHOOL WALL AND REBUILDING IT AFTER FENCING COMPLETED - \$1,800.

C. ILLUMINATION - \$16,450 TO \$20,550.

4. EMBASSY LOOKED INTO POSSIBILITY OF ASPHALT OR ARTIFICIAL SURFACE IN PLACE OF FORMER CLAY SURFACE.

LOCAL CONTRACTORS ADVISED THEY HAD NO EXPERIENCE WITH ARTIFICIAL SURFACES AVAILABLE IN U.S. AND IN ADDITION COST APPEARS PROHIBITIVE. ASPHALT SURFACES WERE CONSIDERED LESS PREFERABLE THAN CLAY, OWING TO INTENSE SUMMER HEAT IN AREA. FOR SAME REASON, ILLUMINATION FOR NIGHT PLAY DURING SUMMER MONTHS WOULD BE HIGHLY DESIRABLE. EMBASSYSTAFF ASSOCIATION WOULD PLAN TO PAY FOR MAINTENANCE/WATCHMAN AND ELECTRICITY EXPENSES OUT OF STAFF ASSOCIATION CONTRIBUTIONS.

5. EMBASSY STRONGLY RECOMMENDS FBO APPROVAL TO INITIATE FORMAL BIDDING PROCEDURES FOR PERIMETER WALL AND TENNIS COURTS AND, IF FUNDS AVAILABLE, FOR ILLUMINATION AS WELL. ALTERNATIVELY, WIRING FOR ILLUMINATION COULD BE INCLUDED IN RECONSTRUCTION OF TENNIS COURTS WITH ACTUAL INSTALLATION OF LIGHTS AND POLES DEFERRED UNTIL FUNDING SITUATION BRIGHTENS.
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